THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The scheme of "Establishment of Agri-Clinics & Agri-Business Centres by Agriculture Graduates" was launched on 9th April, 2002. The objective of the scheme is to provide fee based extension and other services to the farming community, while also creating self employment opportunities for agriculture graduates. This is expected to improve farm production and productivity.

The selected agriculture graduates are provided training in agri-business development for 2 months in over 67 training institutes throughout the country. Handholding support and institutional credit are available to promote these ventures.

(c) Yes sir.

(d) This project is open for implementation in all the States and Union Territories. A total of 5709 agriculture graduates have been trained under the scheme, of which 1220 have set up their agri-clinics/ventures so far.

(e) As under (b).

System for monitoring rain deficiency

1599. SHRI S.M. LALJAN BASHA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the rain deficiency States visited by the Central Teams to assess the situation on cultivated crops;

(b) the details of their observations;

(c) the action taken to assist the affected districts;

(d) whether any system of monitoring for rain-deficiency has been planned; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) to (e) The rainfall situation during South-West Monsoon in various States are constantly monitored. This year, 10 States, *viz.* Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Rajastha, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh have

reported drought situation of varying magnitude. Rajasthan has reportedly declared drought in parts of 25 districts in the State.

In response to the Memoranda received for Central assistance, Central Teams have so far visited Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh and are shortly visiting Chhattisgarh and Karnataka. Requests received from these States for assistance from National Calamity Contingency Fund (NCCF), etc. are in various stages of progress, as indicated below.

High Level Committee (HLC) for sanction of assistance from NCCF have already considered the requests relating to Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh and have approved assistance as under:

Assistance from	Foodgrains for NCCF* (Rs. in crores)	Relief employment (Lakh MTs)
Andhra Pradesh	141.47	2.20
Bihar	162.15	2.00
Jharkhand	139.82	0.67
Madhya Pradesh	36.30	1.00
Tamil Nadu	156.84	1.50
Uttar Pradesh	360.94	–

*subject to adjustment of balances in CRF.

Central Team visited Rajasthan recently and its Report is under preparation. Meanwhile, 2 lakh MTs of foodgrains for drought relief employment have so far been allocated to the State. Release of Central share of Calamity Relief Fund (CRF) for 2004-05 to the States is indicated below:

	(Rs. in crores)
Andhra Pradesh	180.56
Bihar	061.05

Chhattisgarh	12.51
Jharkhand	25.84
Karnataka	67.98
Madhya Pradesh	57.10
Punjab	55.93
Rajasthan	188.71
Tamil Nadu	93.57
Uttar Pradesh	66.68

Punjab Government had submitted a combined Memorandum seeking assistance for flood and drought, without giving specific damage caused by the two calamities separately. The State Government has been advised to submit separate Memoranda for the two calamities.

Enhancing production of horticulture

1600. SHRIMATI S.G. INDIRA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are considering to enhance the production of horticulture products to 300 million tones by 2011-12;

(b) whether it is also a fact that Government are considering to bring in 40 lakh hectares under horticulture;

(c) whether Government are considering to convene a meeting of State Agricultural Ministers a discuss switching over to horticulture in area where traditional crops were grown; and

(d) if so, the steps taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) The Government is considering to enhance the horticulture production in the country by addressing the issues on research, plantation development, post harvest management, processing and marketing. Coverage of new areas under horticulture with improved varieties has also been envisaged under the Mission.